Florida voters do what's good for the geezers
02/12/2008 © Miami Herald

Geezers rule.

Don't be misled by a media dominated by images of young scruffies pimped out in tattoos, tattered tees, torn jeans and contemptuous expressions. Like they think they won.

Not in Florida. The young here have been relegated to a perpetual underclass. Us geezers just keep 'em around to cut our hair, wait on tables, sell us iPods, repair our Macs, wash our cars, install flat screen TVs and pay a wildly disproportionate share of the taxes.

Geezers have rigged the system. We starve the education system. And we get ourselves a steady flow of cheap labor with limited skill sets. Youthful scruffiness, in Florida, isn't so much about style as economic necessity.

SCHOOL SPENDING

The state's school spending per student consistently ranks among the lowest in the nation (as low as 49th according to the teachers union). We're saved from an even more ignominious status by one of the nation's highest dropout rates. Thank goodness for those dropouts else Florida would really have reason to be embarrassed.

The rankings, of course, were compiled before Amendment 1 passed on Jan. 29. Old farts who've been living in homesteaded residences for years were already wallowing in a Save Our Homes break that heaped a disproportionate chunk of the tax burden onto young, first-time homeowners.
Now us hoary old cusses get to take our gigantically unfair property tax dodge with us when we move. As longtime homesteaders cash in on the new portability loophole over the next five years, Florida schools figure to lose $1.6 billion.

So what. It's not like we were budgeting to send the brats to college. "We're cheap and proud of it," Charles Reed, former chancellor of the state university system, told a state education think tank, according to The Tallahassee Democratic. He was repeating his famous pronouncement made a decade earlier when he left to take over a system in California with higher aspirations.

**CHEAP AND PROUD**

Reed came back to find an even cheaper Florida. And still so very proud of it. He noted that state funding for higher education has remained static over the last five years even as the population boomed. The state's professor-to-student ratio is the nation's worst. (Or best, from the selfish Geezer standpoint.)

Reed's observations were echoed last week in a dour report from ENLACE, an group of state educators who worry about minority participation in higher education. The first line of the report notes that on Jan. 24 the state Board of Governors popped the little urchins with an 8 percent tuition hike.

We've put a three-year freeze on the number of incoming freshmen we're allowing into state universities. We're going to cut back on the number of kids transferring from community colleges. There's serious talk in Tallahassee about cutting back on the number of students who receive Bright Future scholarships.

The ENLACE report charged that, "A decade of state underfunding, combined with unfunded enrollment increases, has put Florida's state universities and community colleges on the brink of a deep and serious crisis."

ENLACE calculates that over the next four years, as many as 60,000 qualified high school grads will be turned away from state universities.

But that's a very one-sided, pessimistic view.

Us Geezers figure, hey, that's 60,000 more candidates to flip our burgers, brew our coffee, mow our grass, listen to our complaints and dig our graves.

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**Office of the Chancellor**

**No Articles Today**
Global reach
02/12/2008 © Tallahassee Democrat

When U.S. university students study abroad, they learn about different nations, cultures and religions. Regardless of a student's academic discipline, possibly the most important lessons he or she brings home are about bridge-building — and often a deeper respect for this country.

But students don't have to leave their campus to develop an understanding and appreciation for the larger world.

One of a university's most important roles is as a revolving door whose users are engaged in a wide range of social, academic, economic, cultural and political activities, be it a science colloquium, a community volunteer project, or a United Nations peace initiative.

Two events Monday here in Tallahassee underscore the importance of nurturing Florida public universities as centers of learning that, despite the extraordinary financial pressures they currently face, continue to look beyond parochial interests.

Florida State University's Claude Pepper Center for Intercultural Dialogue hosted leaders from Rwanda and Saudi Arabia as part of a conference called "Bridging Civilizations." The purpose was to build support for a U.N. initiative to promote respect and understanding across national and cultural divides — especially to counteract extremism that threatens international stability.

The FSU center is coordinating the activities of a new alliance of universities worldwide devoted to fostering what executive director Monsignor William Kerr called "a global climate of dialogue."

On the other side of Gaines Street, Florida A&M University announced Monday that Nobel Prize-winning physicist Jerome Friedman would kick off a series of FAMU Department of Physics lectures starting Feb. 21.

FAMU physics professor Ray H. O'Neal, one of Mr. Friedman's former students at MIT, invited the Nobel laureate to speak at Florida A&M.

That perfectly illustrates how universities promote learning far beyond the boundaries of a particular campus — be they related to the structure of matter or
the urgency of cultural and religious understanding in a world threatened by terrorism.

As the world grows smaller, universities can play an increasingly important role as catalysts, so long as they have the tools they need to do their job.

**Florida Atlantic University**

**Interfaith seminar draws 1,100 at FAU**

02/12/2008 © Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel

Angels and demons, saints and murderers: Both are spawned by religion.

"There is no true religion, only true faith," religion scholar Thomas Idinopulos told 1,100 listeners at Florida Atlantic University on Monday night. "Religion can produce goodness and peace, but also madness, murderers, terrorists.

"Beliefs may be right or wrong; they may be idealistic or tyrannical. But faith doesn't deceive, because it leads to good works, and to social and moral justice."

Idinopulos, a comparative religion professor at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, was one of several speakers -- Muslim, Jewish, Christian -- the interfaith Shemin Trialogue Seminar.

The scholars acknowledged the forum's title – "Children of Abraham: One God, Many Voices" – but were realistic about barriers among the faiths.

"Here we are, all claiming bragging rights to Abraham," said Rabbi A. James Rudin, senior interreligious advisor for the American Jewish Committee. "But we're dealing with deep, embedded values of life in this world, and in the world to come. Nothing is more important than that."

Rudin said Jewish-Christian relations have dealt with theological issues, such as Israel, the concept of a Messiah, and how to bear witness of one's faith. Jewish-Muslim relations, however, must tackle "territorial" matters such as land, sovereignty and how a majority should relate to a minority.

The rabbi urged his listeners not to stop at catch phrases, but to continue to dealing with hard issues.
"'Children of Abraham' should not be a slogan, but an invitation to understand," he said. "Yes, we need love, sweet love, but that's not sufficient. We need a theology of pluralism – the belief that that is, in fact, God's will.

"Don't despair. Be prisoners of hope."

Sulayman Nyang, the third main speaker, agreed with Idinopulos about terrorists who kill in the name of religion.

"Today, many Muslims are hellbent on using violence to further their cause," said Nyang, professor of African studies at Howard University in Washington, D.C. "This is one of the tragedies of the modern period.

"Those who are interested in dialogue must be able to separate religious and political issues," he added.

Nyang said America has some advantages for interfaith dialogue. One is the First Amendment, which allows rights for minorities and "gives us room to live together and learn from each other."

Another is to see religious pioneers – such as Abraham and Jesus – as immigrants, like many people who have come to America.

"The three religions are linked by immigration at a philosophical and geographical level," said Nyang. "This is an important point in interfaith relations."

Nyang noted that other religions, too – including the Bahai Faith and the Mormon Church – "define themselves by the Abrahamic tradition."

Indian teachers in St. Lucie County could be deported
02/12/2008 © Stuart News

By the end of this week, St. Lucie County School officials hope to know the fate of 16 teachers from India who are facing deportation because of a visa error.

"These folks are good, highly qualified people, and they deserve to be here," Superintendent Michael Lannon said.
The Indian teachers are here as part of an exchange program with Florida Atlantic University that helps fill the need for experienced math and science teachers.

The problem is that when the teachers were hired in August, they were given the wrong type of short-term visas — ones that did not allow extension requests — said Aileen Izquierdo, FAU vice president of communications. The request could only take place if the school district asked the teachers to stay for the remainder of the school year.

FAU officials learned of the problem in late November and have been working with the U.S. State Department since December to resolve the issue, she said.

On Friday, the Indian teachers were told about the problem and that they could not return to their classrooms or get paid until it was resolved, Lannon said.

"Their immediate response was, 'Can we get back to our classrooms to leave lesson plans for the substitute teachers?' " Lannon said.

None of the teachers were in their classrooms Monday, and district officials have found substitute teachers to fill the spots, he said. Hiring substitute teachers will cost the district $70 a day per teacher, said Sue Ranew, district assistant superintendent of human resources.

The mishap occurs a month before public school students take the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test, which measures students' proficiency in reading, math and science.

"This week, we're not anticipating any impact on the writing portion because they don't teach language arts," said Lannon, about the FCAT Writes +, which takes place today and Wednesday for students in fourth, eighth and 10th grades.

The threat of deportation occurs about a month before students are to take the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test, could have dire consequences for some participating schools such as Dan McCarty Middle School and Treasure Coast High School, which earned a "D" grade from the state, and Southport Middle School, which earned a "C."

"We have no idea what will happen to test scores," he said.

Dan McCarty Principal Kerry Padrick said school staff are continuing to focus on preparing students for FCAT Writes +.
"We are just taking it one day at a time," she said.

**Florida Gulf Coast University**

**Use FGCU inaugural for needy**
02/12/2008 © Ft. Myers News-Press

Good for Florida Gulf Coast University President Wilson Bradshaw for putting the money that would have been spent on party favors at his formal inauguration next month into a scholarship fund instead.

But why stop there? As reported in The News-Press on Monday, some other colleges have decided to cancel presidential inaugurations altogether and divert the money saved elsewhere.

In the FGCU case that would save $75,000, or five times as much as the party favors cost. Each $15,000 could cover in-state tuition for a needy student. That's five students right there.

We would love to see the resulting fund named for Bradshaw, as was done with the president of the University of Albany in New York in 2005, where the donation kicked off a highly successful scholarship drive.

Lee County is a great place to raise money for good causes, as witnessed by the perennial success of United Way and of FGCU itself in fundraising. People would love to jump on a bandwagon propelled by such an offer.

Are we being killjoys? After all, the inauguration of a new university president, like the inauguration of a president of the United States, is a chance for the new leader to inspire his campus and his community by setting goals for an institution that should be central to our identity. As ritual, inaugurals are valuable celebrations; we all feed off pomp and ceremony.

But these are trying times. The real estate bust and the impending budget crunches for universities and other public institutions - as well as tuition hikes - require a new kind of inspiration. Austerity can be inspiring, too, when times are tight. Bradshaw, who relied on need-based financial aid and jobs at the post office and at a shoe store to get through college, obviously has a keen interest in seeing other kids receive such assistance.

The inaugural set for March 28 will last for two hours. A scholarship fund could last forever.
Rwandan President Paul Kagame brought his message of education and peace to Florida State University on Monday, expressing his desire to invest in his country's best resource, its people.

In years past, Kagame said education was used as a tool to teach hatred, but he has changed that and has increased educational opportunities in the once war-torn country.

"The issue of quality education remains a considerable challenge," said Kagame, who was heavily guarded. "Education is almost everything."

Kagame was one of several African and Middle Eastern world leaders who spoke Monday at the university in support of a United Nations initiative, the Alliance of Civilizations, which also included a presentation by Abdullah Alireza, Minister of State of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The program was sponsored by the FSU Claude Pepper Center for Intercultural Dialogue.

FSU is leading U.S. colleges in support of the Alliance of Civilizations, which includes a group of high-level experts charged with exploring the roots of polarization among societies and cultures and recommending solutions.

As part of the university's Global Peace Exchange, a nonprofit that sends students abroad to act as community ambassadors, at least 17 FSU students will go to Rwanda this summer for a month to teach computer skills and help build a technical school. Kagame said he was open to reverse the student exchange and have Rwandan students come to Tallahassee to study at FSU.
"This is a great moment for us here at the university," said Monsignor William Kerr, executive director of the Claude Pepper Center, who organized the international conference. "It is our honor to host President Kagame, who I think will be regarded as one of the great presidents of this century."

Many have credited Kagame with turning Rwanda around since the genocide that occurred there in 1994, which killed thousands a day. Before 1994, Kagame said there was only one institution of higher learning in Rwanda with a thousand students, and now there are 18 colleges with about 40,000 students.

Former Florida Secretary of the Department of Corrections James McDonough listened to Kagame's presentation Monday. The former secretary met the president when he was a paratroop colonel in the Army commanding an infantry that went to Rwanda in 1994 to help "stop the dying."

"He is certainly a man a vision; he was always that," said McDonough of Kagame. "He's done a remarkable job. . . . Prior to the genocide in 1994, education was exclusive and indoctrination and now he has to make it inclusive and focus on values and skill sets that will hopefully modernize his country."

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**New College of Florida**

No Articles Today

**University of Central Florida**

No Articles Today

**University of Florida**

**Students may be shut out of attending college at UF**
02/12/2008 © Gainesville Sun

With the number of applicants on the rise, and state funding dropping sharply, Florida high school graduates may find themselves shut out of the University of Florida and other public state universities when it comes time to go to college.

As many as 60,000 qualified Florida students could find their applications turned down by the state's 11 universities, according to a report from ENLACE Florida, or Engaging Latino Communities for Education. The state education group has recently taken a closer look at the potential effects of budget cutbacks on higher education.
The report, "Higher Education in Florida on the Brink," warns that "access to higher education is at risk for all Florida students." Even Bright Futures scholarship holders and community college graduates may find there's no room for them within the state university system, according to ENLACE.

"It is a capacity issue and it is a resource issue," said UF Provost Janie Fouke. "We just don't have the capacity to keep up at the rate the young people are coming at us."

If the state universities choose to freeze enrollment at 300,000 spots, the report predicts, about 40,000 qualified students would be denied admission by the year 2012. In what it calls a "worst-case scenario," the numbers of students shut out of a college education could reach 60,000 by 2012.

And if universities are prohibited from admitting any more students than the Legislature provides funding to educate, enrollment caps could become a reality. Tuition covers just 25 percent of the cost of a university student's education in Florida; the state funds the remaining 75 percent.

UF is shutting the admissions window for fall today, according to Fouke. UF had 28,000 applicants; 6,600 will be admitted.

"We are certainly (saying) 'yes' to fewer people," she warned. "The number of applicants is soaring, but our capacity has not changed."

Fouke said the number of applicants from community colleges, including Santa Fe Community College, is also on the rise. Those who have earned an associate of arts degree are guaranteed admission to one of the state's universities.

It may not be UF. And they may not be admitted to the college of their choice.

"If they want to enter a major at UF where there is no capacity, such as nursing, we cannot take them," Fouke said.

By state estimates, Florida's universities face $147 million in cuts this year, followed by as much as $171 million in 2008-09. The Board of Governors, which oversees all public universities, has warned them that they may have to freeze or even reduce their enrollment if they do not find additional funding.

Ret Thomas, a guidance counselor at Buchholz High School, said that even without the current budget cutbacks, admission to the four-year universities has become progressively more competitive and more selective each year.
"Budget restraints, if it forces them to lower their enrollment cap, will just add insult to injury," Thomas said.

"Even without budget restraints, admissions directors of the most highly selective state universities - Florida, (the University of Central Florida), (Florida State University) and (the University of South Florida) - are saying, 'You'll be surprised at some of the kids who may not get in,' " Thomas said Monday.

"A kid who'd be a borderline admission two or three years ago is absolutely a no-go now," he said.

As a guidance counselor, Thomas recommends that every student have a backup plan, rather than counting on getting into one particular college or university.

The message, according to Thomas, is clear: It is harder and harder to get into state schools, and the competition is keener every year.

"More kids are taking a realistic look at other state schools, even if they were born and raised in Gainesville and have a lot of Gator in them," he said.

Thomas' advice is echoed by Bill Goodman, supervisor of guidance and student services for the School Board of Alachua County.

"My best piece of advice would be look at your educational credentials and have two or three schools in mind as you shop for the school to match your needs," Goodman said.

Not all high-wage, high-demand jobs require a bachelor's degree, Goodman said. And UF is not the best choice for every high school student, he added.

"These days, anyone who puts all their eggs in one basket is not doing themselves a favor," he said.

UF police retain the power to tase
02/12/2008 © St. Petersburg Times

Using a Taser stun gun against a student who disrupted a campus forum would still be allowed under a revised policy approved for University of Florida police, officials said.
The new policy is the product of 14 separate drafts written since police shocked a university student at a September forum with Sen. John Kerry, D-Mass. The student, Andrew Meyer, physically resisted being escorted from an auditorium.

The new policy states that Taser use "is not a justified response to passive physical resistance." That would apply to a person who goes limp in the hands of officers, a technique often used during sit-in style protests.

It also states that a Taser should not be used "as a response to verbal dialogue." The revised policy also said a Taser should not be used against a person who is fleeing, unless that person is physically resisting, has harmed someone or presents an imminent physical threat.

**Legislature 2008: Lawmakers chomping to bite Gators over tags**
02/12/2008 © Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Apparently, only one thing can unite fractious Republican lawmakers at the state Capitol.

And it's not Hillary Clinton.

It's the University of Florida.

On Monday, GOP lawmakers announced a rare, united House-Senate effort to force the state of Florida to lower its barriers to specialty car tags that honor University of Georgia alumni. Otherwise, the Georgia legislators said, they will discontinue the Gator-oriented tags just won from the state Department of Revenue by an Atlanta group of University of Florida grads.

Pitching the bill is House Minority Whip Barry Fleming (R-Harlem), who just happens to be running for Congress this summer and will require support from Athens, where he just happened to earn undergraduate and law degrees. And despite the Georgia-Florida jokes that clog offices and sports bars throughout the state, the lawmaker says he is dead serious.

"Just like we have reciprocity for bar exams, just as we have reciprocity on tuition and all kinds of licensing and whatnot, it would make sense to have reciprocity in this area, too," Fleming said.
Creating a new specialty car tag in Georgia requires a petition signed by 1,000 people who declare themselves willing to pony up the extra $25 for the privilege. The state revenue commissioner must approve the design.

Members of the Atlanta Gator Club just completed the process.

But in Florida, those who want a new specialty tag must pay the state government a $60,000 processing fee. An independent firm must conduct a random survey of the Florida population to determine that at least 30,000 residents intend to purchase the plates. At least 1,000 specialty tags must be sold every year. And the design must be approved by the Legislature, according to the Florida state department of motor vehicles Web site.

Georgia Senate President Pro Tem Eric Johnson (R-Savannah) said those requirements amount to a ban when it comes to UGA alumni in Florida. "If this bill passes and you can't get a University of Georgia alumni tag in Florida, then they would not be able to renew [their] tag," Johnson said.

Bill Piercy, an Atlanta business lawyer and a '94 graduate of the University of Florida, didn't like what he heard.

"Obviously, we're disappointed. We're willing to pay the fee just like the wildlife people," Piercy said.

**Animal hospital planned for UF**
02/12/2008 © Gainesville Sun

The University of Florida will soon have a new small-animal hospital.

The new building will be completed around 2010, according to Sarah Carey, director of public relations at the UF College of Veterinary Medicine.

Carey said the hospital will represent a new face for the south end of the UF campus, and construction costs could exceed $50 million.

Carey said the hospital will contain all the new "bells and whistles" in addition to the equipment the current hospital has. She said the new building will make things easier for everyone with more space to operate, which translates into more room for students to learn, she said.
Robert Hockman, associate director at the veterinary college, said the new hospital will have a linear accelerator, which produces and delivers radiation with precision that was previously unavailable - precision as close as millimeters.

In addition, a heart catheterization lab and more physical therapy space will be available, he said. Also, an emergency center will be open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Hockman said the first floor of the new hospital will handle general treatment and diagnosis, while the second floor will be the site of surgeries and anesthesia. The third floor of the new building will have meeting rooms and other areas for faculty.

Karen Hickock, director of development for the college, said cats and dogs will have separate treatment centers.

The new hospital will be built next to the existing one at 2051 SW 16th Ave. The new structure will be built out from the existing hospital, and some space from existing parking lots will be used for the new building.

"We are the Shands of the vet world," Carey said.

The veterinary hospital handles special cases from many other veterinary hospitals around the state, she said. Carey said the UF Veterinary Medical Center is the primary referral center for the entire state, and 90 percent of the hospital's care is by referral, she said.

"People from all over the state send their dogs, cats, iguanas and endangered species here," she said.

Carey told about a 6-year-old boxer named Sirus and the treatment the dog received at UF.

Carey said Sirus was suffering seizures, and Marc Mandeville, Sirus' owner, drove a day and a half from Knoxville, Tenn., to get him to Gainesville for treatment, as UF is the only place in the Southeast that offers the stereotactic radiosurgery the dog needed.

Because of the treatment, Sirus is doing well to this day, Carey said.

"That story really floats my boat," she said. "This is what we can offer here."
UF President Denies Saying Fla. Agriculture Dying
02/12/2008 © Lakeland Ledger

LAKELAND | Whether or not University of Florida President Bernard Machen called Florida agriculture a dying industry, he faces a political truism: Perception often trumps reality.

Machen denied Monday that he said "agriculture is a dying industry in the State of Florida" and "not worthy of the investments being made by the Legislature" in the university's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS).

Nevertheless, the accusations have generated a firestorm of reaction among agriculture leaders and their legislative supporters.

"He's getting a full-frontal attack from agriculture saying we are important," said Doug Bournique, executive director of the Indian River Citrus League in Vero Beach. "The word's getting very strongly back to the University of Florida that agriculture is very important to this state - it's the backbone."

"Our president, John Hoblick, said he hadn't seen anything galvanize the agriculture industry like this since the penny-a-pound tax," said Rod Hemphill, director of public relations at the Florida Farm Bureau in Gainesville.

Hemphill referred to a failed 1996 statewide referendum that sought to levy a one-cent tax on sugar to clean up the Everglades.

Machen's comments were reported Feb. 5 in the online version of Farm & Ranch News, a Tampa-based monthly newspaper covering Florida agriculture. He denied making those comments in a Thursday letter to the publisher, George Parker, and in a press statement released Monday.

Parker told The Ledger on Monday he stands by the story and the quotations.

"Multiple sources," who asked for anonymity to protect themselves, reported hearing Machen make the comments during a Jan. 30 private meeting, he said.

At issue is how much of a proposed $50 million cut in this year's UF budget IFAS will have to absorb. Stephen Orlando, a UF spokesman, confirmed the university would have to cut that amount from its 2007-08 budget and a similar amount in the next fiscal year.
State Sen. J.D. Alexander, R-Lake Wales, said Machen told him IFAS would have to take a "disproportionate share" of the $50 million in cuts. If the university did an across-the-board cut, IFAS would lose $5 million.

But Machen also indicated he would not cut funding for "critical basic or applied research," Alexander said. That would seem to protect programs Florida agriculture considers vital, such as research in combating citrus greening, a fatal bacteria that threatens to destroy the state's citrus industry.

"We need research now more than any time in our history to see us through these two critical diseases," Bournique said, referring to greening and citrus canker, another devastating bacterial disease. "The last thing we need is a cutback."

The UF president indicated that IFAS extension programs, which work with growers and ranchers to apply that research to their operations, would be a lower priority subject to cuts, Alexander said.

Alexander, Bournique, Hemphill and other agriculture officials acknowledged IFAS will have to take cuts, but they indicated they hoped to limit them to its proportion of the total.

"The Farm Bureau is holding out for a proportional cut because extension is important to agriculture and the well-being of the state," Hemphill said.

"They (growers) want to make sure IFAS remains a priority, a core responsibility, of the university. That includes educating students, extension and applied research," said Ray Royce, executive director of the Highlands County Growers Association in Sebring.

Whether or not Machen made the statements Farm & Ranch News attributed to him, the article generated an immediate reaction from top figures in Florida agriculture and their legislative supporters.

More than 60 agricultural and legislative leaders participated in a Feb. 5 conference call sponsored by the Farm Bureau about the IFAS cuts, Hemphill said. It occurred hours after the release of the Farm & Ranch article.

"I've got to believe he was misquoted. I hope in my heart of hearts he was," Bournique said. "If (the quotes) did happen, President Machen is hearing very loud and clear how important agriculture is from Pensacola to Key West."

Others were not so optimistic.
"Would it surprise me that he would not see it (agriculture) as a priority? No. Did he say that exactly? I don't know," Royce said.

In his statement released late Monday, Machen said: "The comments about the future of agriculture which were attributed to me in Farm & Ranch News are not true. As the state's land grant university, the University of Florida remains committed to supporting Florida agriculture. The industry is important to the state's heritage and economy, and UF has a role to play in the challenges it faces in the future."

He also called for understanding regarding the university's budget challenges.

"UF's overall funding is 17 to 20 percent less than our peers. UF's faculty/student ratios are among the worst in the country. We have a hiring freeze, in effect since last July, and have been mandated to reduce our budget by $50 million before July 1," Machen said in the statement. "I am committed to making targeted reductions in programs instead of across-the-board cuts. All parts of the university, including IFAS, will be impacted. We expect to make final budget decisions later this spring."

**Help for student veterans**

02/12/2008 © Miami Herald

GAINESVILLE -- There's a fast-growing new community on the campuses of our universities and colleges -- young men and women combat veterans fresh out of military service. Those here at the University of Florida and Santa Fe Community College have change on their agenda.

With the help of a local congressman, supporters in the community and a soft-spoken campus veterans' adviser, they just might succeed in fixing some problems and meeting a need that no one imagined we'd face.

The biggest and most expensive dream of these new GI Bill scholars is to build a special 90-apartment complex to accommodate the physical and educational needs of young military veterans who've come home severely wounded from Iraq and Afghanistan. SFCC President Dr. Jackson Sasser was an early and enthusiastic supporter of the assisted-living facility for wounded veterans, and Dr. James Bernard Machen, the president of the University of Florida, supports the effort, too.
These veterans -- some missing limbs, others paralyzed -- require levels of assistance and care that virtually lock them out of higher education. Some are even sent to live in nursing homes filled with those whose lives are ending, not just beginning.

John Gebhardt works with the 900 to 1,000 new veterans who're attending the university and the college each semester. He and they are passionate about wanting to provide a better opportunity for severely wounded young veterans to gain an education.

"The facility we hope to see built here would be totally handicap-accessible," Gebhardt told me this week. "With both hired staff and volunteers, the wounded veterans would be provided transportation to classes on the two campuses, as well as rides to the regional Veterans Administration center for ongoing medical care."

The complex also would have facilities for physical therapy and rehabilitation and, when these veterans have to return to a VA hospital for treatment of old or new complications from their wounds, other volunteer veterans would help them keep up with their studies so they don't lose entire semesters. "We are talking about young people who have sacrificed so much in service to our country," Gebhardt said. "They need an education; they need to be with people their own age; they need to begin easing back into society and finding a future for themselves."

Such a facility would cost an estimated $30 million for the purchase of the land and construction. U.S. Rep. Cliff Stearns, a local Republican, is an enthusiastic supporter of the idea and is going to bat for the money in Washington.

The student veterans community at the two schools here also is working with a committee headed by retired Army lieutenant general John LeMoyne. He dropped out of college in 1964, fought in Vietnam, went back to school and earned his degree, then returned to a distinguished military career that spanned four decades.

The group wants to create a scholarship fund to make up for the shameful bureaucratic bungling that keeps young combat veterans who enter college under the Montgomery GI Bill waiting 60 to 90 days for their first benefit checks. The fund is intended to help those who can't afford to support themselves for that long -- and those who have to wait longer than 90 days for their VA benefits.

"Landlords don't wait six months for your rent, and college bursars don't wait six months for your tuition payment," said veteran Dan Wojcik, who attends the
University of Florida. "Some vets are forced out of school before they even get started because the Veterans Administration can't get its act together and start paying them the monthly stipend they earned the hard way in a timely fashion."

No one wanted to say how shameful it is that a community must raise money to compensate yet again for the federal government's failure to do right by the waves of new veterans who are coming home from war and trying to get a new start in life.

There you have it. These young veterans, like all the veterans of all our wars, must do their own creative thinking about how to get their brothers and sisters out of nursing homes and hospital wards and into college -- and then find the money to tide them over for half a year while all those billion-dollar computer systems grind and whir and finally spit out miserly little checks to help them pay for college.

**UF unveils new rules for police Taser use**
02/12/2008 © Orlando Sentinel

Using a Taser stun gun against a student who disrupted a campus forum would still be allowed under a revised policy approved for University of Florida police, officials said.

The new policy is the product of 14 separate drafts written since police shocked a university student at a September forum with U.S. Sen. John Kerry, D-Mass. The student, Andrew Meyer, physically resisted being escorted from an auditorium by police.

Under the revised guidelines, officers still would have been justified in using a Taser, said Lt. Robert Wagner. A Florida Department of Law Enforcement investigation ruled that the officers had followed state guidelines.

The new policy states that Taser use "is not a justified response to passive physical resistance." That would apply to a person who goes limp in the hands of officers, a technique often used during sit-in-style protests.

It also states that a Taser should not be used "as a response to verbal dialogue." The revised policy also said a Taser should not be used against a person who is fleeing, unless that person is physically resisting, has harmed someone or presents an imminent physical threat.
The officer also must be able to explain the reason for using a Taser under the guidelines.

Police Chief Linda Stump said the revised policy is being implemented and said it clarifies protocols that were already described in the department's use-of-force manual.

A committee formed after the Meyer incident is still drafting a report that will weigh in on whether Tasers belong on campus at all. Stump added that police would continue to support the use of Tasers.

Critics of Taser use have expressed concern that people who have pre-existing medical conditions may be placed at fatal risk when shot with the stun guns.

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**University of North Florida**

**No Articles Today**

**University of South Florida**

**Venture to focus on brain injuries**
02/12/2008 © St. Petersburg Times

TAMPA - The James A. Haley VA Medical Center and the University of South Florida announced on Monday that they are entering into a partnership to research traumatic brain injury.

Traumatic brain injury is considered the signature wound of soldiers serving in Iraq who are often exposed to explosions. Up to 20 percent of all returning troops exhibited symptoms of the injury.

Congress last year set aside $450-million for research on the condition, which is still poorly understood by the medical community.


How soon or how much of the money will come to Tampa is not immediately clear.

"We have unique assets here," Castor said. "So we're going to use all that leverage to draw down as much of those research dollars that we can."
She said it was unique set of circumstances having a major veterans hospital sitting side by side with a major research university like USF. And both are a short drive from MacDill Air Force Base.

Also, Haley is home to a polytrauma center, one of just four in the nation where physicians treat some of the most severely wounded veterans.

Haley doctors said the partnership contains an education component that allows researchers to "export" their knowledge on treating traumatic brain injury to hospitals around the nation.

"The care we provide here will provide the benchmark for the rest of the nation," said Dr. Edward Cutolo, Haley's chief of staff.

Traumatic brain injury is sometimes called an invisible wound that can be difficult to diagnose. Even mild cases can alter a person's life, destroying careers and families.

"These types of injuries have been coming back from war as long as wars have been out there," said Dr. Steven Scott, director of Haley's polytrauma unit. "And we don't know much more now than we did in 1910 or 1915."

Dr. Stephen Klasko, dean of the USF medical school, said Castor's language will force the Pentagon to treat the partnership like a "top tier" institution in its decision making on who gets funding. The money is allocated on a competitive basis.

The partnership may create jobs and will help USF in its effort to recruit top researchers, he said.

"We're seeing kids, young folks who have injuries they never would have survived" in previous wars, Klasko said. "And now they have the ability not only to live but to lead productive lives."

Haley, the nation's busiest VA hospital, may treat more returning veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan than any other VA facility in the nation.
LARGO - Things may look bleak for Florida's public university system, where schools are slashing budgets and laying off workers because of a tight state budget.

But for some schools in the for-profit college industry, money is flowing.

Investors with big pools of cash, such as private equity firms, have pumped millions of dollars into the industry in the past few years, and some of that cash has been used to snap up small Florida colleges and expand their programs. The moves mirror a national trend: private equity firms are spending billions to buy for-profit career colleges so they can build enrollments and then potentially spin them off for big profits.

Locally, Knowledge Investment Partners, a private equity firm based in Cleveland, bought Largo-based Schiller International University, which specializes in business programs, in September for an undisclosed sum. KIP wants to boost enrollment and add three new campuses to the six Schiller has overseas, said university Provost Cathy Eberhard.

Other Florida schools that have been bought include Lauderdale Lakes-based Florida Career College, which has two local campuses, and Florida Coastal School of Law in Jacksonville, one of the nation's only for-profit law schools.

The career college industry has taken some heat in the past over allegations that it recruited unqualified students to boost profits and skepticism about school accreditation. In 2004, industry giant University of Phoenix paid $9.8 million to settle charges that it paid recruiters based on the number of students they enrolled, a violation of federal regulations.

Still, some for-profit colleges have succeeded by drawing millions of students and opening new campuses or degree programs quickly to capitalize on changes in the labor market. With the flood of private investor money into the industry, for-profit colleges may be able to open new campuses and attract students who otherwise might go to state schools or community colleges.

"A lot of higher education traditionalists don't like the rise of for-profit schools, I think, but it is happening," said Donald Jones, chief executive of a foundation that oversees Fort Myers-based Southwest Florida College. Unlike many peers, Southwest Florida College is a nonprofit career college.
Many career colleges got their start decades ago as small, family-run operations. But by the late 1970s, big players such as the University of Phoenix appeared on the scene, said Harris Miller, chief executive of industry trade group Career College Association.

Offering Real-World Skills

Most of the largest for-profit college companies are publicly-traded, including Phoenix-based Apollo Group (which owns University of Phoenix), DeVry Inc. of Oakbrook Terrace, Ill., and Corinthian Colleges of Santa Ana, Calif., the owner of Everest University, formerly Florida Metropolitan University. Companies like Apollo Group generate more than $2 billion a year in revenue - a testament to the exploding interest in adult education and career training.

These operations have grown quickly by offering real-world skills training for adults. Students often are working adults who want to learn computer programming, paralegal skills or culinary arts. Some schools have broadened into fields such as international business.

Making a big push into the industry in recent years have been private equity firms, which get their cash from pension funds, insurance companies and wealthy individual investors.

Between 2000 and 2006, an average of 107 colleges a year changed ownership, according the U.S. Department of Education. In 2000, only 3 percent of the ownership changes involved private equity firms. But by 2006, private equity firms were involved in 37 percent, the agency said.

Many of the buyout targets were small colleges. But in March 2006, two private equity firms paid $3.4 billion for Education Management Corp. of Pittsburgh, which operated 72 campuses, including Argosy and South universities and the Art Institutes, all of which have Bay area campuses.

More recently, the Leibrecht family, which owned Schiller International University in Largo and its six European sister campuses, decided to sell. Among other programs, Schiller focuses on international business degrees. It has 500 students at its Largo campus and 1,200 students throughout its system, Eberhard said.

Knowledge Investment Partners Chairman Robert Daugherty could not be reached for comment. In a letter to students and faculty posted on Schiller's Web site, Daugherty said his firm wants to boost Schiller's enrollment at all of its
campuses and add as many as three campuses, potentially expanding to Asia, the Middle East or South America.

Since buying Florida Coastal School of Law three years ago, private equity firm Sterling Capital Partners has tried to expand the for-profit law school concept by opening two new law schools in Phoenix and Charlotte, N.C.

Large Potential For Growth

Driving investors' interest: the industry's huge growth and healthy cash flow, said Chas Edelstein, an investment banker with Credit Suisse who works with for-profit colleges.

From the 2002-03 school year to the 2006-07 school year, enrollment at degree-granting career colleges in Florida, such as University of Phoenix, more than tripled to 250,652 students from 67,939 students. Enrollment has fallen by a third, however, at non-degree granting institutions that offer career certificates, according to the Commission for Independent Education.

Meanwhile, for-profit colleges generally have healthy cash flow because students must pay tuition up front, so the colleges don't have to wait for payment such as other businesses.

And, with the explosive growth in online classes, for-profit colleges can educate thousands of students without the cost of classrooms, Edelstein said.

It's not clear how profitable small, for-profit schools are. Many career colleges specialize in teaching massage therapy, truck driving, cosmetology, and the like, and occasionally run into financial trouble. During 2006-07, 61 career schools closed in Florida, most of them small institutions, said Samuel Ferguson, executive director of the Florida Commission for Independent Education, a state office that regulates career colleges.

Effect Of Downturn Unpredictable

The biggest schools have generally done well, however, with enrollment and profits growing, said Guilbert Hentschke, a professor at the University of Southern California who has written about for-profit schools.

For example, Strayer Education of Arlington, Va., the operator of Strayer University, saw revenues of $263.7 million in 2006, compared to the $116.7 million it booked in 2002, according to financial reports. Profits also doubled to $52.3 million from $25.8 million over the same period. And ITT Educational
Services, which operates the ITT Technical Institute franchise, saw revenues and earnings soar over the same period.

With the Florida and U.S. economies weakening, for-profit schools and their investment-firm owners could see mixed fortunes. On the downside, banks and big student loan companies, such as Sallie Mae, are cutting back on loans to the riskiest students. That could hurt for-profit colleges, which have among the lowest graduation rates of all colleges.

On the upside, career colleges historically have prospered during weak economic cycles because nervous or laid-off workers want to learn new skills, said Edelstein at Credit Suisse.

**National Higher Education Issues**

**Israeli medicine stronger than ever**
02/12/2008 © Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel

This month's announcement of a new initiative to distribute $60,000 grants to doctors from English-speaking countries who make aliyah raises an obvious question: If such incentives are required to bring top medical caregivers to the Jewish state, just how bad is Israel's health-care industry?

In fact, this program for doctors from the United States and Britain — sponsored by Nefesh B'Nefesh and the Legacy Heritage Fund in collaboration with the Israeli health and absorption ministries — highlights the state of medicine in Israel, which is at its strongest point ever and has earned the well-deserved prestige of being a global leader.

This is not an accomplishment that has come quickly or easily.

When I began in my post at the Shaare Zedek Medical Center nearly two decades ago, the norm for seriously ill Israeli patients with means was to ask where outside Israel they should go for the best care. Lacking confidence in the Israeli health-care system, patients routinely sought out doctors in New York, Miami, Los Angeles and elsewhere.

Today the opposite is true. Now in Israel, we regularly get cases of supreme complexity in our operating rooms and medical departments, even from patients living outside of Israel.
What has so dramatically and positively transformed Israel's reputation as a medical provider?

The answer lies within the same commitment to excellence that has inspired Israeli successes and global leadership in many fields. Slowly but surely we have improved the infrastructure of our hospitals and the standards of quality that are key for providing cutting-edge medicine in the 21st century.

Much of the credit goes to massive injections of support — moral and financial — from friends of Israel overseas who appreciate that a Jewish state is a most appropriate place to act as a beacon for medical excellence.

Most important, we have relied on that same Zionist ethos of dedicated labor and belief in a dream that has enabled us to add top-level medicine to the feats of this remarkable little nation of ours.

This transformation can be seen both in the physical infrastructure of Israeli hospitals and the rising quality of our primary resource: our doctors and nurses.

Our major medical centers have acquired the type of equipment found in leading Western hospitals. All the diagnostic machinery and therapeutic modalities that characterize major clinical and research institutions in advanced nations now have become the standard in Israeli medicine.

Thus in almost every area, Israel's leading hospitals offer the types of advanced technology that in previous decades might have been available only abroad.

Institutionally, within our hospitals and health systems, and from directives issued by our Ministry of Health, we have strengthened our commitment to quality control and performance.

On the human resource level, Israel has cultivated home-grown talent with medical schools that rival the best in the West. In addition, most Israeli doctors participate in fellowships and post-doctoral studies beyond our borders, typically at leading universities in the United States.

Responding to an expected shortage of medical personnel worldwide, Israel is taking steps to limit its impact at home.

Of course we also have been aided by an influx of talent from the Diaspora. Despite popular perception, within the masses of immigrants from the former Soviet Union have come many skilled clinicians, medical researchers and
accomplished biotechnologists who have contributed enormously toward raising the bar throughout the Israeli health-care and bioresearch communities.

Immigrants of many other countries have joined our work force, and the international flavor of our hospitals and doctors' offices has been a positive development.

As a result of these and many other advances, Jerusalem and other Israeli cities now draw the most highly esteemed figures in health care worldwide to medical conferences in Israel. Procedures and strategies researched and designed within our hospitals' halls are taught at symposia around the world.

Painfully, some of the lessons we have to teach the world are the outgrowths of our nation's wars and conflicts, as our experiences have made us experts in dealing with mass casualty incidents and rehabilitating victims of terrorism. Yet in today's tense global climate, these experiences are vital for the provision of health care, and we are proud to be able to educate others in being prepared for such eventualities even as we pray they never come to pass.

Report Warns of Threat to Campus Reactors
02/12/2008 © Sarasota Herald-Tribune

WASHINGTON — The risks of a terrorist attack on a nuclear reactor on a college campus, and the potential consequences, have been underestimated by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Congressional auditors say in a report.

WASHINGTON — The risks of a terrorist attack on a nuclear reactor on a college campus, and the potential consequences, have been underestimated by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Congressional auditors say in a report.

The report, by the Government Accountability Office, said the commission had overruled expert contractors who thought differently, and misrepresented what the contractors had said.

Security requirements at the reactors have changed little since the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, according to the auditors, even though many of the reactors still run on enriched uranium, which terrorists could convert into an atomic bomb. In contrast, the rules for civilian power plants have become much stricter, the report said.

An unclassified version of the audit found uncertainty “about whether N.R.C.’s assessment reflects the full range of security risks and potential consequences of
an attack on a research reactor.” The audit said that the rules “may need immediate strengthening” and that more parts of research reactors were probably vulnerable to damage than the commission assumed.

Research reactors typically are less than 1 percent as powerful as civilian power reactors, and they usually do not operate under pressure, so there is less energy available to spread radioactive material in case of attack or accident. They are used for scientific research, training and making medical isotopes.

But while power reactors are surrounded by fences and guard towers, the research reactors are often in buildings on densely populated campuses. Some have added concrete Jersey barriers to protect against truck bombs, and better doors. But the “first responders” who would arrive if intruders set off an alarm are most likely to be the unarmed campus police officers, the audit said.

Government nuclear experts brought in by the commission paint a grimmer picture, the report said.

The nuclear commission’s estimates of vulnerability are “not supported” by experts from Sandia National Laboratories, Idaho National Laboratory and the Department of Homeland Security, the auditors said. The Idaho experts said that a terrorist attack could have “significant consequences” and a “high socio-economic impact,” the auditors said.

The nature of the outside experts’ concern is not made clear in the unclassified version of the report, but truck bombs or other bombings have been issues in the past. An article in Science and Global Security in 2003 pointed out that several research reactors had been destroyed by accidental runaway reactions, and that controls were in place to prevent those, though they could be disabled. The nuclear cores of research reactors are usually much more accessible than the cores of power reactors, the article pointed out, often sitting at the bottom of an open tank. Debris thrown into the tanks could clog cooling channels, it said.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission asserted that it was the Government Accountability Office, not the commission, that had misrepresented the position of the outside experts, and made “unsupported assumptions.”

Representative Christopher Shays, a Connecticut Republican who requested the audit, said of the commission: “They’re making assumptions and wishing the threats go away. It’s very disconcerting to me.”

“They don’t want to burden the licensees,” Mr. Shays said.
The commission licenses 33 research reactors, 26 of them to universities and colleges.

But Luis A. Reyes, the commission’s executive director, said in a letter of rebuttal to the accountability office that the auditors did not cite any intelligence information to show that terrorists had the “highly sophisticated methods and skills” that the report said were within their capabilities. The audit “lacks a sound technical basis,” Mr. Reyes wrote.

The G.A.O. “failed to acknowledge key scientific facts,” he added. His response, attached to the unclassified version of the report, which is to be released soon, did not contain any specifics.

David Lochbaum, a reactor expert at the Union of Concerned Scientists, a private group that often raises safety concerns, said steps designed to prevent thefts of fuel from nuclear reactors might have raised the potential for radioactive releases.

To prevent theft, Mr. Lochbaum said, reactor operators have started putting highly irradiated fuel, which is much more radioactive, into their cores, making it impractical for a terrorist to carry fuel away. But that raises the amount of radioactive material available for release.

For 30 years, the Energy Department has been working toward designing new cores for the reactors that would do the same work with low-enriched fuel. In some cases it has completed the designs, but no money is available to convert the reactors; in others, it is still working on the designs.

Research reactors are a threatened species. With a long drought in the construction of power reactors, many universities have shrunk or closed their nuclear engineering departments.

College Leaders Wrestle With How to Prepare for Unknown Threats - Chronicle.com
02/12/2008 © The Chronicle of Higher Education

Nearly 10 months after the Virginia Tech shootings prompted colleges nationwide to take steps to improve safety, campus leaders continue to struggle with how to prepare for unknown threats and determine when and how to inform their campuses of incidents.
That was the message delivered on Monday by the director of public safety at Princeton University and two university presidents—including Charles W. Steger of Virginia Tech—who spoke on a panel at the American Council on Education's annual meeting here.

Mr. Steger described a few changes he has made in the wake of last April's massacre of 32 people at Virginia Tech by a student who then killed himself. The university's chief of police now reports to a high-level administrator on the campus—in this case, an executive vice president. Mr. Steger said he also meets with every new police officer hired by the institution.

Some issues remain unresolved, however, such as how to obtain better knowledge of the problems of incoming students, Mr. Steger said, because of privacy concerns and the continuing debate "over the fundamental question between the rights of individuals and the rights of society."

"This issue needs to be re-evaluated," he said.

One issue that doesn't need to be examined, he said, is who carries a gun on a college campus. "Other than the police, there is no place for guns on campuses," he said to a round of applause. "We're prepared to go to court or whatever else for that."

Wide-Ranging Risks

While the Virginia Tech shootings focused campus officials on preparing for a lone shooter, plenty of other threats confront colleges, the panel members agreed. When asked by the moderator, Janice M. Abraham, president and chief executive of United Educators Insurance, about the greatest threat facing their institutions, the group named a list of potential problems that didn't include a gunman: high-risk drinking, violence against women, and a flu pandemic.

"Each year we continue to add to the plate," said Steven J. Healy, the public-safety director at Princeton. "We can't go to sleep without thinking about what could happen."

Lester A. Lefton, president of Kent State University, said the biggest threat was an unknown event. "But the expectation is that there will be an immediate response to a threat we don't even know," said Mr. Lefton, who was provost at Tulane University when its campus was evacuated for Hurricane Katrina.

In the months after the Virginia Tech tragedy, hundreds of colleges across the country signed contracts with vendors to help push text and voice alerts to
students' cellphones in an emergency. In some cases, colleges have had difficulty in persuading students to participate in the voluntary alert systems. In other cases, the technology has failed.

Princeton first started an emergency-notification system last spring, after the Virginia Tech shootings, and enrollment at first was low. But when this year's freshman class arrived on campus last fall, nearly 90 percent of the new freshmen signed up. Mr. Healy said he suspected participation would increase with each incoming class. In addition, each time the university performed a test, more people signed up.

**Defining a 'Timely' Warning**

A provision in legislation to renew the Higher Education Act that the U.S. House of Representatives passed last week would require that institutions notify their campuses within 30 minutes of a "significant emergency or dangerous situation." That provision, if it remains in the final version of the bill being worked out by the House and Senate, would put a specific limit on the "timely warnings" that colleges are now required to issue when a threat to public safety arises on a campus.

But such a requirement, Mr. Healy said, might prompt an increase in needless notifications, since potentially threatening situations are often fluid. "We don't want to get into a cry-wolf syndrome," he said. "We're on a dangerous path if we try to legislate what 'timely' is."

Before issuing an alert, Mr. Healy said, colleges should make sure that the messages are timely, accurate, and useful. A useful message directs people on what they should and shouldn't do.

"Don't send if you can't meet those three," he said

[The Lobbyist as President - Chronicle.com](http://chronicle.com)
West Virginia is a small place, as anyone here will tell you. Few degrees seem to separate the state's 1.8 million residents, particularly in this college town and in Charleston, the state capital, 130 miles up the road.

The personal connections give West Virginia a friendly, close-knit atmosphere. But they also contribute to its reputation for backroom politics.

Michael S. Garrison is well known in both cities. A native of Fairmont, near the campus, Mr. Garrison, 39, is a first-generation college graduate. He earned bachelor's and law degrees here at West Virginia University, the state's flagship institution, where he was president of the student government. He rose rapidly to high-powered political posts, including chief of staff to a previous governor.

Mr. Garrison then became a lobbyist with the longest client list in West Virginia, a role that ended last April when he was named president of his alma mater.

When he emerged as a finalist in the presidential search, critics bashed his qualifications and said the search was rigged in his favor. The tension boiled over last April, when the university's Faculty Senate voted "no confidence" in the search and in Mr. Garrison's candidacy. While "no confidence" resolutions have become more common in higher education, such a vote is extraordinary before a candidate even takes office. Nevertheless, Mr. Garrison got the nod two days later.

Charges of political favoritism arose again in late December, when Mr. Garrison's administration was linked to a scandal with a list of characters lifted from a "who's who" of West Virginia.

The controversy centered on the university's response to questions about whether Heather M. Bresch had actually earned the M.B.A. she claims to have received from the university. Ms. Bresch, the current governor's daughter, is a friend and former classmate of Mr. Garrison's and works as a corporate executive for the university's largest donor. University officials have blamed a clerical error for the appearance that she is 22 credits shy of her M.B.A.

Mr. Garrison says he has had no official role in the university's handling of Ms. Bresch's transcript. But insinuations have been made about the president and his close ties to the principal players. The matter has drawn national news coverage, which continued through January.

But the campus is singing a different tune. Mr. Garrison is emerging as a popular, successful president. His lobbying contacts, which dogged him during
the presidential search, appear to be proving helpful. Mr. Garrison is an extreme example of the nontraditional university leader, with political savvy and connections but little or no experience in higher education. And there may be more presidents like him on the way.

"When you go out to the lobbyists, you're charting completely new territory," says Rita Bornstein, president emerita of Rollins College and an expert on academic leadership. "This may be the real turning point in the presidency."

**Early Success**

West Virginia University is hardly the first institution to tap a politically connected leader from outside academe. Former-politicians-turned-presidents include David L. Boren, at the University of Oklahoma, and Florida State University's T.K. Wetherell. Both have received mostly positive reviews as college chiefs. A closer comparison with Mr. Garrison is Bruce Benson, who was hired as president of the University of Colorado in January. Mr. Benson had never worked at a university. A former chairman of the state's Republican Party who once ran for governor, he owns an oil-and-gas-exploration company.

Mr. Garrison's supporters, including faculty members who opposed his bid for president, say he delivers results, often quickly. They also like his leadership style, with many praising him as a good listener.

Furthermore, many West Virginians seem unfazed by the tangled web around Ms. Bresch's M.B.A. Useful personal connections rarely raise eyebrows hereabouts. "If you're in any position of responsibility in the state of West Virginia, you're going to know people because you've worked with them," says Stephen P. Goodwin, chairman of the university's Board of Governors.

But Mr. Goodwin, who is himself a member of a politically connected family, says doubts about Mr. Garrison's lobbying past will most likely linger. "I don't think it ever goes away," he says.

L. Christopher Plein is assistant dean of the university's School of Applied Social Sciences and chairman of the department of public administration. As a new member of the Faculty Senate, he says, he had serious concerns about how the presidential search was handled. But Mr. Garrison quickly earned his trust with his collegial approach and sophisticated understanding of the university's culture and mission.

"I really have to give him high marks," Mr. Plein says.
Since beginning the job, in August, Mr. Garrison has pushed through the biggest raises for faculty and staff members in 15 years. He landed a $25-million donation, the largest private gift in the university’s history. He has also led the charge for an expensive public-private program to pay for research and faculty recruitment, which Gov. Joseph A. Manchin III, a Democrat, supports.

Clearly the former lobbyist can get things done.

**Skepticism Wanes**

Donald E. Hall, chairman of the English department and a member of the Faculty Senate, has also taken note. Mr. Hall wrote the no-confidence motion that passed last April.

"I was very skeptical about the search and Mike Garrison," he says. But since then, he says, he has approved of Mr. Garrison's leadership style and priorities for the university. Mr. Hall and several other faculty members say they have been pleased and surprised by the performance of the president, whom they describe as accessible and a quick study.

Matthew S. Delligatti, a senior majoring in political science who serves on the city council in Mr. Garrison's hometown, was impressed by Mr. Garrison during several open forums on the campus. "A lot of times, in these types of meetings, a person will get up and try to show how smart they are," he says. Mr. Garrison listened and asked questions, Mr. Delligatti says, even when facing a somewhat hostile crowd.

Although Mr. Garrison still has opponents, they surface mostly in letters to local newspapers or in anonymous posts on blogs. The complaints are often tinged with politics. Critics at the university are increasingly isolated or keep their doubts private.

At least one faculty member remains angry. Paul B. Brown, a professor of physiology, says he has no confidence in the investigation of the degree-transcript controversy or in Mr. Garrison.

"I still want him out," says Mr. Brown. He bemoans the corporatization of higher education and says Mr. Garrison was hired because of his clout with lawmakers and developers. But Mr. Brown concedes that he has few vocal allies, saying that he is "really appalled" that Mr. Garrison has won over so many former opponents.

"Some of them changed their tune as soon as he was appointed," says the professor. "They want a piece."
Mr. Garrison freely acknowledges that he answers to constituencies beyond Morgantown. "These are not mutually exclusive things, to be for the university and for the state capital," he says. "I feel completely comfortable in Charleston. I think it is an advantage, without question."

Like many college presidents, Mr. Garrison has the air of a politician. He is tall and has slicked-back hair. He speaks in the precise language of a lawyer. But he also manages to be casual, and most people address him as Mike. At 39, he is younger than most other administrators and many faculty members.

The best cure for doubts about his qualifications, Mr. Garrison says, is his consensus-building and strong track record, such as the pay increase and similar moves.

"You've got to be willing to work with folks who weren't necessarily supportive of you in the role in the first place," he says. "I don't take any of that personally. It's not about me. It's about the university."

**Hiring the Right Leader**

West Virginia University's previous president, David C. Hardesty Jr., who served for 12 years, was widely considered a strong leader. Like Mr. Garrison, he was a lawyer and former student-government president. But he had more career experience and better academic bona fides.

The search to replace Mr. Hardesty drew an initial pool of 100 names, which was trimmed to about 60 by last January. A few members of the search committee say their lists of top candidates were similar. "Most of them agreed on the top five," says James E. Brick, chairman of the department of medicine and a member of the committee.

If complaints were raised about Mr. Garrison's lack of experience, they failed to keep him off the list of three finalists. The other choices were Daniel O. Bernstine, who was president of Portland State University, and M. Duane Nellis, provost of Kansas State University and a renowned geographer. Mr. Bernstine dropped out after touring the campus. (He took a job a few days later as president of the Law School Admission Council.)

Like Mr. Garrison, Mr. Nellis has many ties to the university. He was dean of arts and sciences from 1997 until 2004. Many faculty members consider him a friend, as do members of the presidential search committee.

The grumbling about the search got loud when the three finalists came to the campus for public forums.
The strongest criticism came from Judge Robert B. King, a member of the Fourth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals, who holds degrees from the university and the law school. In a letter to search-committee members, he raised concerns about the role of politics in the search and asked whether the process should start anew.

Fueling the fire was the state's Republican Party chairman, Doug McKinney, who said the search had raised "serious concerns of political cronyism." Some faculty members went public with their doubts as well.

Mr. Goodwin, the Board of Governors chairman, says the committee followed a "very forthright, upright, open process," which resulted in the list of three finalists, all of whom went public. Then, in a final decision, which was not unanimous, the committee picked a leader whom the majority felt could get the job done.

"That's all you can hope for," he says.

The position of several faculty members who had been critical of the search process is summed up by Mary Ellen Mazey, dean of arts and sciences, who said in January, "We have no choice but to move on."

A member of the search committee, Ms. Mazey is also Judge King's sister. She and many other faculty members say they are optimistic that they can work with Mr. Garrison, whom she praised for reaching out to faculty and staff members.

"The most important thing is to advance West Virginia University," she says.

Mr. Hardesty agrees. The previous president now teaches in the law school, where his successor can be spotted in a picture of the Class of 1996 that hangs just outside Mr. Hardesty's new office. He says Mr. Garrison was a savvy leader during his first semester as president.

"I think universities hire what they need at the time they need it," says Mr. Hardesty. "The proof will be in the pudding."

The presidential search that brought in Mr. Garrison taught faculty members about the changing role of a public-university president, says Mr. Plein.

"I became more aware of the various constituencies that a president must serve," he says.

**Cronyism or Confusion?**
The M.B.A. saga began in October with a news release from Mylan Laboratories Inc., a major manufacturer of generic drugs, which has a subsidiary based in Morgantown. Mylan's co-founder and chairman is Milan (Mike) Puskar, who is one of the university's most generous benefactors. His company employs 2,000 people in Morgantown. The university's football stadium bears his name, in exchange for a $20-million donation.

Ms. Bresch is Governor Manchin's daughter. She had worked for Mylan for 15 years when she was promoted to chief operating officer in October. In a news release, the company listed her as having an M.B.A. and an undergraduate degree from the university.

The *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* looked into her record and in December published the first in a series of lengthy articles that questioned whether she had completed the course work for the business degree. The newspaper reported that university officials had made contradictory statements about her transcript. Published internal e-mail records indicate that several campus officials were involved in the initial response to the degree discrepancy, including Mr. Garrison's chief of staff, Craig Walker, and R. Stephen Sears, dean of the College of Business and Economics.

In January the university created a panel to investigate Ms. Bresch's academic record, how the inquiry was handled, and whether there are systemic problems with degree records.

Ms. Bresch could not be reached for comment.

The situation is riddled with possible conflicts of interest. For example, Mr. Sears's deanship is endowed by Mylan. But most of the attention has focused on Mr. Garrison's many ties to Ms. Bresch. In addition to being her high-school and college classmate, Mr. Garrison worked directly with her for some of his time as a lobbyist for Mylan. According to documents obtained by *The Chronicle*, she signed his lobbying-registration forms in 2004-5 when she was Mylan's vice president for public and government relations.

**President's Response**

Mr. Garrison says his only role with the degree inquiry has been to refer it to the "academic unit for review and decision making," as he says he does with all academic matters. He says his office received simultaneous calls from the *Post-Gazette* and Ms. Bresch, who he says called because she was puzzled about the newspaper's query. "That was the only discussion we've had about it," he says.
The governor, through a spokeswoman, says he has made no efforts to interfere. Mr. Garrison says he has never been pressured by Governor Manchin about the university's response to questions about the degree.

"The insinuation that I somehow, or someone under my direction, may have influenced it is flatly and categorically wrong," Mr. Garrison says. "It's the heart of who we are — our academic integrity."

The Faculty Senate was initially critical of the makeup of the investigation's panel. The university's administration moved quickly to assuage those concerns, dropping an official from the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission and expanding the membership to allow for outside panelists. The panel now includes two West Virginia faculty members and three from institutions outside the state.

The changes in the panel have quieted criticism on the campus, where suspicions that Mr. Garrison is a pawn of the governor seem to be fading.

"I have no doubt that Mike Garrison will have clashes with the governor," says Dr. Brick, the medicine-department chairman. "I don't think you can survive in this job if you think that the people you serve are just the university."

Mr. Garrison has won supporters by making quick, popular decisions. And it can't hurt that he knows the right people around the state, particularly during budget season.

The challenge will be his ability to continue delivering. For now, many here say they are content to wait and see.

**Tuition Lawsuit Puts Study-Abroad Practices in the Spotlight, Again - Chronicle.com**
02/12/2008 © The Chronicle of Higher Education

A lawsuit challenging the policy of Wheaton College, in Massachusetts, to charge its regular tuition to students studying abroad on less-costly independent programs is the latest sign of continued scrutiny into the finances of overseas education.

In the lawsuit, filed late last week, James P. Brady, the father of a recent Wheaton alumna, accuses the private liberal-arts college of "unfair and deceptive" billing practices for charging full tuition, plus room and board, for a semester his
daughter spent studying in South Africa in 2006. The program, offered by the School for International Training, an outside provider, cost about $17,000, according to the complaint, while Wheaton's per-semester costs at the time were more than $21,440.

Mr. Brady, a lawyer who has represented employees in several high-profile whistle-blower lawsuits, is seeking a declaratory judgment that would upend the longstanding practice at Wheaton and, potentially, at other colleges of charging "home school" tuition for credits earned through programs offered by outside providers.

**Increasing Scrutiny for Programs**

The lawsuit comes amid other growing pains for study-abroad programs. Last summer, New York's attorney general, Andrew M. Cuomo, opened an investigation into colleges' relationships with companies that provide overseas programs, and Connecticut's attorney general, Richard Blumenthal, has joined the inquiry. Mr. Cuomo is seeking information about a variety of financial practices, including whether overseas-education providers bill students or their home colleges for program costs, whether colleges charge administrative fees related to study abroad, and, if they do, whether they disclose such costs (*The Chronicle*, February 1).

As foreign study expands in popularity and prestige, many observers, both inside and outside the field, say colleges need to do a better job of explaining their policies to students and their parents (*The Chronicle*, September 7, 2007).

"Study abroad has gone from being boutique to a mainstay," says Carl A. Herrin, an independent international-education consultant. "In the current situation, we're definitely under the microscope."

In the Wheaton case, Mr. Brady says he discovered the nearly $4,440 discrepancy between Wheaton's costs and those charged by the School for International Training shortly before his daughter, Jennifer Bombasaro-Brady, left for a semester in Durban, South Africa. He says he complained to Wheaton officials but was "stonewalled." A week after Ms. Bombasaro-Brady graduated, he filed suit, arguing that Wheaton officials never provided any services to his daughter in exchange for tuition.

"Their predatory attitude," he says, "made me feel that I had no choice."

Wheaton officials defended their policy and said that the tuition guidelines were stated in advance.
Although Mr. Brady's lawsuit is believed to be the first of its kind, he is not the only parent to go public with his objections to the practice of charging the home institution's tuition for credits earned overseas. Last year, Emory University found itself in the spotlight after a father — who was also assistant vice chancellor of international programs for the University System of Georgia — complained that his son was denied academic credit when he took a leave of absence and enrolled in an overseas-study program not approved by the university (The Chronicle, October 1, 2007).

Mr. Brady says he has heard from a half-dozen parents, of students at Wheaton and at other institutions, since he filed suit on Friday.

**Call for More Openness**

Many study-abroad experts acknowledged the frustrations felt by parents like Mr. Brady and say that colleges should disclose and clearly explain their policies to students and their families. The Forum on Education Abroad, a consortium of American and overseas colleges and outside providers, is expected to issue guidelines that emphasize such openness next month.

For their part, Wheaton officials say that the tuition policy is stated online and in program materials. In a letter to students and faculty and staff members, Ronald A. Crutcher, Wheaton's president, defends the college's practice, saying that charging home-school tuition while providing financial aid "puts study-abroad opportunities in reach for many more of our students."

Mr. Crutcher also pointed out that many other colleges have similar policies in place. In fact, a survey on program management conducted last fall by the Forum on Education Abroad found that 47 percent of institutions require their students to pay home-school tuition.

Not all colleges have moved in that direction, however. Duke University, for example, considered adopting such a policy in 2000 but ultimately rejected doing so. Margaret Riley, Duke's director and associate dean for study abroad, said officials there agreed that it was unfair to charge students a premium to transfer academic credits from overseas institutions when the university did not make students pay for other outside credits, such as those earned in high-school Advanced Placement courses.

Still, more colleges have moved toward charging home-school tuition for outside programs to help underwrite the costs they incur in such programs, says Brian J. Whalen, the forum's president. In addition to defraying some of the expense of financial aid, the funds are used to evaluate the independent programs, to
respond to overseas emergencies, and to absorb costs related to keeping students enrolled even when they are abroad, he says.

Overseas-study costs also are often bound up in broader tuition debates, particularly at private institutions, where tuition and financial aid are closely linked. "It's a complex financial algorithm" decided by vice presidents of finance, not study-abroad directors, says JoAnn S. McCarthy, who recently stepped down as assistant provost for international affairs at the University of Pennsylvania and now works as a private consultant.

Mr. Herrin, the international-education consultant, says that, in part, the charges are a reflection of the growing popularity of overseas study. The number of students studying abroad has doubled over the last decade, but institutional support for such programs has not always kept up, he notes.

**Mistakes, Not Hackers, Are to Blame for Many Data-Security Glitches on Campuses, Report Says - Chronicle.com**
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**Russian Court Shuts Down University That Offered Politically Sensitive Courses - Chronicle.com**

02/12/2008 © The Chronicle of Higher Education

A Russian court has ordered a university that receives support from Western organizations and had offered courses in election monitoring to shut down immediately, in what professors said was the first time an entire university had been closed for political reasons under President Vladimir V. Putin.

The ruling, issued by a court in St. Petersburg on Friday, shut down the European University of St. Petersburg just as a new semester was about to start and after many of the 170 students who were scheduled to attend had arrived in the city.

Mr. Putin had criticized the university last fall, accusing it of meddling in Russian politics, according to news reports, and a highly placed government official raised similar concerns in late December, a professor told *The Chronicle*.

The order to close came despite the university's recent decision to shut down a major program on election monitoring as too political, with Russia's presidential election coming up on March 2.

**Buildings Blamed**

The court's ruling did not mention politics. Instead, it upheld a decision by the city's fire department, also issued on Friday, that the university's historic buildings were unsafe for students because of fire hazards.

The institution's president, Nikolai Vakhtin, disputed that finding. "We were totally shocked on Friday when the fire inspector announced their verdict to us," Mr. Vakhtin said by telephone on Monday.

"Our university had never had even any complaints from fire or any other inspections since 1996, when it began its work," Mr. Vakhtin said. "There is a dark cloud of uncertainty hanging over our university. I keep hoping and telling our students that we will solve our problems and reopen our university."
While denying the fire-safety accusations, Mr. Vakhtin declined to say whether he believed the closing was political.

The university, which was supported in part by grants from the Ford, MacArthur, and Soros foundations, offered master's degrees in economics, ethnology, history, and political science/sociology. Its diplomas were issued in conjunction with the University of Helsinki, in Finland. It also provided programs in the humanities, including an art-history program that offered special access to the treasures of the State Hermitage Museum, which holds one of the world's largest repositories of art (The Chronicle, June 19, 1998).

Liberal politicians in St. Petersburg, journalists, and professors familiar with the European University described it as a well-known island of liberal ideas for its offering of courses on human rights and democratic institutions.

**Research on Elections**

Its political troubles started last year, when the university won a European Commission grant worth about $900,000 for a project intended to improve the monitoring of elections in Russia. The political-science faculty created a regional network to provide research materials on regional and federal elections and prepared a course for political-party workers on election law.

"If we saw violations of election law, we openly talked about," said Grigory Golosov, a professor of sociology and political science who led the project. Mr. Golosov said the university was closed because of his project, even though the program had already shut down.

Another professor, who spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of losing his job, told The Chronicle that the university had received a threat in late December from a high-ranking government official who said that the project should end or the whole university would be shut down.

The university closed the project on January 31. Mr. Golosov said no formal explanation was provided for the closure, and Mr. Vakhtin, the president, declined to discuss it.

Mr. Golosov suggested that the closure might have unintended consequences for elected officials. "Authorities do not understand what a big mistake they are making," he said. "Now they are supported by the majority of Russians, but very soon, depending on the country's state of economy, the majority might change their mind and say the election was fake."
"Our project was needed to avoid such outcomes," he said.

During Mr. Putin's eight years in office, his government has shut down a number of human-rights groups, nongovernmental organizations, and political parties, usually citing technical reasons but often with suggestions that the organizations were interfering in Russian politics. Most recently, two English-language schools operated by the British Council were closed in January. Authorities said the schools, in Yekaterinburg and St. Petersburg, were closed for lacking licenses, but some politicians accused the council of using the schools to recruit spies.

"The totalitarian system has once again shown that it has no tolerance of criticism," said Maxim Reznik, a leader of the opposition Yabloko party in St. Petersburg. "Opposition candidates have no chance to register," he said, adding that Western-supported organizations "get on the Kremlin's blacklists, and now the whole university is being closed for its fair and genuine research about elections."